

**Political History Collection
Interview H.0007.01 : Tape 1**

Melvyn Goldstein, Editor

**Center for Research on Tibet
Department of Anthropology**

and

**Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio**

©2004

Location of Interview: Majnu Tila, New Delhi, India

Date of Interview: November 1992

Language of Interview: Tibetan Paljor Tsarong

Name: (Litang) Athar, Ngawang Norbu [Tib. (li thang) a thar ngag dbang nor bu]

Gender: Male

Age: ca. 61

Date of Birth: 1931

Abstract

Ngawang Norbu [Tib. ngag dbang nor bu], also known as Litang Athar [Tib. li thang a thar], was a monk and trader in Bö. He was part of the first group of six Khambas taken from Kalimpong to Saipan in 1957 by the CIA for training. He was parachuted into Central Tibet in October 1957 to make contact for the Americans with Phala and the Dalai Lama. In this interview, he discusses his time as a monk at the Litang Monastery and the 1949 arrival of the Communists in Dartsedo. He talks about the behavior of the soldier once they arrived, the effects of their arrival and the various trips made by the Dalai Lama around this time. He also talks about the emergency meeting the Chinese held with the Litang monks, his pilgrimage to Lhasa as well as preparing for war and the start of the fighting. He discusses going to Kalimpong, the plan to send people to Taiwan and his meeting with Gyalo Thöndup. He then describes the training he and five others received in Okinawa, becoming successful with this wireless training, being dropped in Tibet after completing the training and how they had no plan to revolt against the Chinese.

Tape 1

Q: Whether you want to start from 1949 or 1950, during this period where were you?

A: In 1949-50, I was in Litang in Kham.

Q: In, Litang-

A: Yes.

Q: What was your household like in Litang?

A: I was a monk at the Litang Monastery. My natal household was located towards the north at a place called Changpa [Tib. byang pa]. In Litang, there were 5 nomadic pön. It was said to have 5 units of 1,000 villages [Tib. stong sde] and there were 8 large groups [Tib. shog chen] and 16 smaller groups [Tib. shog chung] of farmers and each group had a pön. My family was one of the smaller pön. We had about 600 miser in our group that was called Changpa. It is two a day's ride from the Litang Monastery. In Changpa there is the village called Shabdrong [Tib. zhabs grong] which was located below the Janggyab [Tib. lcang rgyab] Monastery. The name of our household was Kokötsang [Tib. ?] and I was the youngest of the 4 sons. Everybody calls me Litang Athar, but my real name at the monastery is Ngawang Norbu [Tib. ngag dbang nor bu]

When I was young, our household was wealthy but later when I grew up, our household did not seem to be so wealthy. All the elders and the people who could work had died and we went through some difficult times in our livelihood. My father died when I was 4 and so we were all young and the household went through some difficult times. The reason was that about 50 infamous bandit riders came to our house. Such things happen in our Kham country. We were quite wealthy then, but after my father died about 50 riders raided our house and took away quite a lot of things and left and we became very poor. During this time, my mother made us all monks. Three of us were monks at Litang Monastery and the other brother became a monk at our village monastery called Jangyab Monastery. So I was at the Litang Monastery and studied the pecha. When I was 16, I was not able to study much. I was young and sort of wild and liked to just hang around. So I did not study the pecha much.

Since the monks like us were not wealthy, we had to do the monastic work obligations like ritual dances and other smaller tasks, in addition to learning the pecha. I did all these things until I was about nineteen. At that time, I worked for one of the jiso. In our Litang Monastery, there were 8 jiso, I worked as the servant to the jiso. Consequently, at age 19 I went from Dartsedo to [central]

Tibet doing tea trading for the monastery". This was in 1950. My patron, jindag [Tib. sbyin bdag] had to go to Dartsedo to get the tea and it was at that time that the new communists first came.

Q: When they came from Dartsedo was that in 1950?

A: Yes, it was the end of 1949, I think, and so around 1950 they came to Dartsedo. At first, when they were quite weak. The [communists] came to the top of the Arlang Shan Mountain Pass. I don't know where they came from before that. Once again, a military commander [Tib. dmag dpon] called Tan Sizhang brought some of the Guomindang troops and they stopped the communists at the road of the Arlan Shan. There was a Chinese song, something about "Arlama Arlangshan [Ch. er la ma er lang shan]". Well it was said that this song was a song of screaming because they had a very hard time on the mountain pass. The reason being was that the Guomindang commander called Tan Sizhang fought them and their planes dropped arms and necessities in Dartsedo. Our jindag said that 3 or 4 days after the air drop, at Gyayü Jagsamkha [Tib. rgya yul lcags zam kha] which was said to be the border between China and Tibet where there was the [bridge] called Ludingchao [Ch. lu ding qiao] at the foot of the Arlang pass, they were stopped for two days at the bridge. Anyway, they [the Guomindang] were not able to stop them all and Tan Sizhang fled from Dartsedo towards Chülung [Tib. ch. ?]. Then he fled south to Gyelthang [Tib. rgyal thang] and Sadam [Tib. sa tham] behind Chantreng [Tib. cha phreng] to the Burmese border. Later, there were a lot of things said about many Guomindang troops being stranded in Burma and the troops were to be taken to Taiwan. So these were some of those troops. So Tan Sizhang went from Dartsedo. He was said to have around 1,700-1,800 or so troops but who knows how many got to the Burmese border. So that's how they lost and the communists came to Dartsedo. Before our jindag came up with the tea, it was filled with communists. So that was sort of the end of the Guomindang era.

In the summer, the 5th month of 1950, just before we were leaving for Lhasa, I was among those who had to perform the opera in the monastery. At that time, Baba Phüntso Wangyal came from Dartsedo to Litang with 500 Chinese troops.

Q: So that was the first time, right? About 500 soldiers.

A: Yes, and among them were Baba . It was said that the commander [Tib. dmag dpon] was Baba Phüntso Wangyal. At that time, there were some young Babas whose parents were Baba and Chinese mixed who came along with Phüntso Wangyal. Today some of them are in Lhasa and they are high ranking cadres. I know some. At that time, in Litang, we used to call them Chinese kids, gyatrug [Tib. rgya phrug]. During the Guomindang period they were children of medical personnel, cooks and cadres. So there were 5 or 6 of them with Phüntso Wangyal and today they are in Lhasa; all ranking cadres.

So when they came to Litang, there seemed to have been around 250-260 Guomindang soldiers guarding the county [Tib. rdzong srung]. There was a person called Si Lingzhang. He was made a monk at Litang Monastery and fled and came to hide in our land just above our house where there was a cave among the rocks where monks used to stay in retreat. He stayed there. Then from Litang, Phüntso Wangyal went to Ba with 500 soldiers. Just after that and just before we went to Lhasa, a commander [Tib. dmag dpon] came. I don't know his name but his cheeks were ripped. It was said that he was the one who took Markham Garthok [Tib. smar khams sgar thog] Chamdo, and all. It was at Markham Garthok that Degesey [Tib. sde dge sras] surrendered.

Phüntso Wangyal and he were there. Along with him was I think about 5 to 7 thousand troops. We had a huge clearing at Litang and it was almost full and they pitched tents. The side of the field was in a hidden area and that area was pretty much full. So these soldiers went up to Ba. So at that time, I was a "servant" of the jiso and went via chang with loads of tea. We went from Litang to Dege [Tib. sde dge], to Dzachukha [Tib. rdza qu kha], to Kyekudo [Tib. skye rgu mdo], then to Nagchukha and Lhasa. It took about 10 months and then we hired the transportation pack animals for the tea loads.

When we were coming up, the Chinese and the Tibetan government had come to an agreement and the Chinese were also coming up with us at about the same time. It was a time when they had made the agreement and they were now permitted to come.

Q: Had the Dalai Lama already come from Yadong?

A: Yes, the Dalai Lama had already arrived and the Chinese were also arriving. They were coming via the North from Jyekundo and we were also coming along with them. They were coming and so too their loads and things, etc. So before we came from our homeland, it was said that Tibet and China had signed an agreement and that they were going to go to Tibet. But first it was at Ba Drowachuka [Tib. ?], then Dege ferry site Kamthogtrukha [Tib. skam thog gru kha], then Den Drölma Lhakhang [Tib. ldan sgrol ma lha khang] where probably our Tibetan government seemed to have fought somewhat in these three places. However, they were not able to fight and stop them. They lost at Ba and then they came to Markham Garthok where Degesey surrendered himself including his army and the arms. Then they came to Chamdo and that was lost and Ngabö was caught at some place, it was said. Then Dege Kamthogtruks was lost then at Den Drölma Lhakhang, in the Den Chökhör [Tib. chos 'khor] Monastery. I don't remember the name now, but one of the shengo, he put up quite a good fight. Den Drölma Lhakhang was on the other side of the river. On this side was Den Chökhör Monastery. The latter was part of the Tibetan government and the former under the Guomindang control. So it was this and that side of the river. Starting from up there along the Yangtze River, Den Drölma Lhakhang was at the upper part of the river. So they couldn't stop them and the Tibetan government lost and the agreement was signed. When we came to Lhasa many Chinese soldiers had come and they were also coming up at the same time as us. So we stayed at Lhasa for about a year trading and the following year I went to India. By then up to Yadong and Dzalepla [Tib. rdza led la] Mountain Pass it was full of Chinese.

Q: Then did you go down? So you went from Lhasa to India and Kalimpong.

A: Yes, I went down. From Lhasa I went to India, to Kalimpong then down to Jyekundo, and then down to Chamdo. Lhasa was the main center from where I went all over. When I was 21, I got down to Kolcutta, this was in 1951, 52. In 1954, the Dalai Lama went down to China for a tour. That year I herded a pack of mules and went to Jyekundo and the Dalai Lama came down from Kongpo.

At that time, I went down to Kongpo to trade and was returning. The Dalai Lama had come at the head of Ganden and was coming down. I went to Lhasa and then from there via the northern route to Jyekundo and came once again to Kham. In 1954, I think, via Garthok to Dartsedo and then to Litang. In 1955, I stayed in Litang for a year and that year the Dalai Lama came up from China. At Minyak Rangakha our Litang Monastery received him. We made requests for the Dalai Lama to come to Litang. The first request was at Lhasa, the second at Chamdo, the third at Ganzi [Tib. dkar mdzes], the fourth at Dartsedo, the fifth, all the way in China. However, at that time, the miser of Litang were not listening to the communists very much. Everyone thought the communists were harmful to the Buddhist faith. Besides, the lower areas passed Litang like Dartsedo and in the areas of China, all of us, the traders heard and knew about the liberation and the difficulties imposed on the people. So everybody knew that they were up to no good and no one was listening to the Chinese. The Chinese also played this up and it was said that the Chinese did not allow the Dalai Lama to come to Litang. They said that if the Dalai Lama came to Litang then they could not guarantee his safety. Five Ladrangs of the Litang Monastery went to see Mao Zedong. They were told that the people who brought the Dalai Lama were the ones responsible and that he could not make any decision on that. So it was up to the Tibetan government. At that time, we did not have any motorable roads and it was about a 5 to 6 day ride from the main road. So it was said that there were no motorable roads and that it would be a difficult journey. When we say ride we mean by palanquin. Our Litang Chogdrub Kyamgön [Tib. mchö drub? skyabs mgon] has the Huthogthu [mong. hu thog thu] ranking from the Tibetan government and so the palanquin was carried by trained mules. There was the American mule and big mules brought from India, they were all there. So the palanquin was ready. There were many dōdō monks who used to carry the palanquin for the previous Chogdrub Kyamgön Rimpoche when he journeyed. They were also ready. However, either the Chinese did not let the Dalai Lama come or the Dalai Lama wouldn't come, either way he was not able to come to Litang. However, all of us from the Litang Monastery went down at Minyak Rangakha where Litang Chogdrub Kyamgön and all of his chandrön [Tib. phyag mgron]; chabu and drönyer chempo and all the pön, pön made the preparations there. There the Dalai Lama gave religious teachings. I think it was like the initiation and transmissions of Avalokitasvara and the transmission of the Ganden Lhagya [Tib. dga' lha brya]. We said that it was the Tibet-China border and Litang Monastery performed a ritual for the long life of the Dalai Lama, tenshug [Tib. brtan bzugs] and they also performed a ransom ritual for the Dalai Lama [Tib. sku glud]. They did a lot of things like this. So this long life ritual was done at Minyak. During this time, I was there. At that time, all of our leaders came and the pön of our place called Noko Dojang [Tib. ?] who was appointed by the Tibetan government, had the status of the fourth rank. So he was there, so was Yönrupön [Tib. g.yon ru dpon], 5 pön of Ga, all the chandrön [Tib. phyag mgron], and various pön of the Litang monastery had all come to meet the Dalai Lama. So they received an audience and some may have talked of the coming difficult times. I don't know what they said since at that time we were young men who were not directly involved. So we don't know what was said and done, but I heard that some received, the Yamantaka, Jikjeymahe [Tib. 'jigs byed ma he] protective talisman. Our pön told me that he received this talisman. Since he was my maternal uncle, I remember this. So we received the audience and the Dalai Lama stayed for three days. Then the Dalai Lama left.

Q: When the Dalai Lama was there, the 17 Points Agreement was already signed, did he say anything about this?

A: The Dalai Lama may have said something to our main pön. You know, we were just young men who were not directly concerned and to tell you the truth, we knew nothing about politics. So I did not know what was said or what was done. What I knew was that on the southern route where there weren't the motorable roads, many monasteries requested the Dalai Lama to visit those places and since he could not go, he sent the younger tutor Trijang Rimpoche [Tib. khri byang rin poc he] to Litang, Chantreng and Dab [Tib. 'dabs ?] and to all of the southern areas. In some areas where the Dalai Lama couldn't go via the northern route, I heard that Karmapa was sent. So at Litang, that was the case. When the Dalai Lama came up, he said that Trijang Rimpoche would come and that there was no difference whether the Dalai Lama or Trijang Rimpoche came and as for the initiations, the transmissions and the oral instructions, his tutor was even better than he was. And so Trijang Rimpoche came to Litang and stayed at our monastery. He then went to Chantreng Samphel [Tib. bsam 'phel] Monastery, Dhab and Chamten [Tib. byams bstan?] Monastery, then to Ba Chöde [Tib. chos sde] Tratsang and to all of the southern areas of Kham.

After all of the various visits, the Dalai Lama had reached Lhasa in 1956. In that year, it was the end of 55 and the beginning of 56. At around that time, the Chinese really "made things harsh". At Minyak, Tawu [Tib. tau], Dartsedo and areas of Chülung (?), these areas were really liberated. They were saying that it was a peaceful liberation, but it was just terrible and the people there suffered. At first they said to hand in guns and arms. Then, poor fellows, the people of Minyak and Tawu were kind of meek [Tib. nyams chung] and they didn't have solidarity. So they were told to hand in their arms, at first the larger swords and our traders who were coming from there saw all this. Then in the Dartsedo area, the earlier Guomindang high ranking people and the high ranking people in Minyak, Tawu, and Gada suffered a lot and were imprisoned, beaten, jumped into the river, hanged themselves and committed suicide. So all of these things were going on in lower Kham, since it began there, and all of the people saw this. Then around the latter part of 55, about the 6th or 7th month there was a meeting that the communists held for the proletariats that they had gathered there. This was the meeting of 500 beggars. So what they were saying was that there would be a peaceful liberation and that everything would be equalized between the haves and the have nots. The poor, when they were told that everything would be equalized, had their high hopes and thought that everything would be divided equally and would result in happiness according to communism. The meeting of the beggars-it was said that there were 600 to 700, and I heard that many people pointed out the faults [Tib. skyon rjod] of many of the elites. Some of the "better" people said, "We have no faults to point out of the rich and they didn't rob our things. We are poor because of our past karmic actions". Anyway, in order to stir up internal trouble, they got 500 beggars together. It was said that there were more than 500 beggars, more like 600-700 of them. In our courtyard there were a few poor people who were also rounded up. Poor fellows, they did not have wealth like we did. But we also did not have much, really just a house. We helped the poor and they were almost our equals. So they were telling us that the communists were doing very funny things and big families like Litang Andrusang, Gyadotsang were being faulted. The better servants said, "We have no faults to point out since when we were poor and had nothing to eat, we were provided food and also given a place to stay". These people were given some gifts and let go, saying that they had done their service. The ones who made accusations and pointed out the faults were kept. So that's what they were doing and I was present then.

Q: When the Chinese first came was their policy very tactful?

A: Oh, when they first came...In our country, in the old days we had no custom for paying for a basket of cow dung. For example if

a traveller went and asked for some cow dung or firewood, they would be given it without cost. When the Chinese came and said they wanted to buy a basket of cow dung or firewood they would give about 1-2 dayan. They were acting tactfully and never went to the miser's house, they never took anything from them. They absolutely stuck to the discipline of war and they didn't allow people to do all sorts of things. So when one looks at it, one gets the impression that the communists were good. So when they fought and destroyed, it was a political decision. The soldiers actually, to tell you the truth, there may have been one or two bad people, but I have not heard of them doing anything bad. They pitched tents and stayed in their camps. If they transported things they paid for the animals, like yaks. If they bought yaks or something, they paid for it. They stuck to their war discipline, and were unlike our soldiers who did all kinds of unlawful things. In the old days, we had our Tibetan soldiers who did many things and so it seemed to me that it was not like that. So I haven't heard anything like that. It is useless to tell lie. But finally, their politics became like that.

In Tibet, what the most important thing is, is the Buddhist faith and it is also the life line. So when it was said they [the communists] were the one who would annihilate the Buddhist faith, it was regarded as very bad and really life threatening for the Tibetans. Then in the Kham country, not only did they annihilate the Buddhist faith, they said to immediately hand in the arms. These arms were all of the things that one had personally paid for and bought. So many household items were sold in order to buy guns, horses and bullets when we needed them and when they said to hand them in, the Khambas regarded it as though the hand-cutter had arrived. We Khambas said that when they told us to hand in our arms, they cut our hands. We considered it the same as cutting off our hands.

So looking at all of these things, first, harming the Buddhist faith, second, bringing hardships and third telling us to hand in the arms. So at Litang they [Chinese] tried all kinds of appeasements and peaceful methods. And as I said before, in the Litang monastery, we had 5 pön, 8 large groups and 16 smaller ones. The main leadership role was at the Litang Monastery. In the monastery, there were 4 chabu and 1 drönyer chempo and so these 5 made the decisions. In the monastery there were 18 khamtsen and they had 18 getshang [Tib.?). So Then the monastery and the village were in agreement - from the monastic side, the Buddhist faith was being destroyed by communism like the monastery of the kheka Jetsün Thamba [Tib. khe kha rje btsun dam pa] and the monasteries all over China. One could plainly see that it was being destroyed. Secondly, from Dartsedo on [to the east in inner China], we knew that all of the better off people were being persecuted. Thirdly, when they were using force and when they said to hand in the arms we did not at all hand over the arms.

They continued their sweet talk. Then one day they called the chandrön and the pön to a large hall. Then there was a civilian official, the representative [probably of the Central Committee], Luo Daibiao. Then there was a Regimental Commander [Ch. tuan zhang] known as Tuanzhang Bartsag [Tib. sbar tshag] or the pock-marked Tuanzhang. He also had webbed fingers so he was also called, "The webbed finger one," jalagjen [Tib. bya lag can] and there were the soldiers under a Regimental Commander. So, the two of them came and Luo Daibiao said that this was the last talk. He said, "Are you going to go on the road to peace or not? If not, then our Communist Party has only two roads to show you. The white road is the road to peaceful liberation. If you do not travel on this path, then the black road is the road to forceful liberation. This forceful liberation would be handed over to the military and so it is really war and then my peaceful work is over. So you decide which road you want to travel".

So some of our old monks said that the Chinese had called this emergency meeting and there was nothing good in this. Usually, the pön and the servants always traveled with guns in their dress pouches. That day, many of the monks of the 18 getsang seemed to have had their guns in their pouches. So when they went there and when the Chinese said those things, we had this elderly monk by the name of Aku Yama [Tib. a khu ya ma]. We were from the same khamtsen and mitsen and he was one of the more active ones in our khamtsen. He said at the meeting, "We will not accept any kind of liberation, whether it is peaceful or forceful or whatever; we will not accept it. Let alone the question of making decisions about the monastery and the entire Litang region, Ngari Shinkhang [Ch. an er xing kang] I can't even make decisions in my own apartment. Who can make such decisions? You are telling us to hand in our arms, what do you mean? These are all of the things that we have paid for from our own pockets and not some kind of salary paid by the government. We have sacrificed food and drink to buy such arms. And these are to protect our lives from the robbers. So we will never hand in the guns.

Then they [the Chinese] said, "There is no need for you to listen to this suicidal [Tib. skye med sdug zad] old monk who is about to die and you younger people should all think for yourselves". Then the younger ones replied, "We have nothing to talk about. It is as our elderly monk has already said. Leave aside the question of making decisions about our Litang Monastery and the entire region, we can't even make decisions about our own household. We won't dare to make the decision and we are not going to make the decision". Then they [the young people] got up and said, "You are only talking about a black and a white road, send us which ever way you want to. Whether you are going to send us on the black or the white road. We just heard that after death, there would be a white and black road at the front of the Lord of Death [Tib. a khu gshin rje chos rgyal] in the hell. Otherwise, in this worldly existence, we don't know anything about any black and white road". Then they all got up in a kind of commotion and went back home. That day, thanks to the presence of all of the Chinese leaders, the Chinese did not do anything and let them go. They might have thought that if they did something, something might happen to the Chinese leaders [Tib. dpon po]. So from that day on, the Sino-Tibetan friendly relations were broken. So the Chinese had nothing but force to use. Litang Monastery gathered all of the pön of all of the large and small groups, lay and monk and made preparations for the war.

At that time, I had already left. I left in 1955, in the 11th month, on the 27th day from Dartsedo to Lhasa. My mother and her siblings had never been on a pilgrimage to Lhasa and seen the Buddha's statue in the Jokhang, the Jowo [Tib. jo bo]. The situation was bad and there was a lot of commotion. At that time, there was vehicle traffic to Tibet. First, from Litang it's a 5 day ride to Minyak and then from there vehicles go straight to Lhasa. My mother, my brother, a servant, and I went to Minyak and from there the vehicles went to Lhasa. So I went to see a lama and asked him to do a divination and asked whether or not I should take my mother and it said that I should go soon, otherwise I would not be able to go. My mother was quite elderly and my brother had never been to Lhasa and in Kham custom if one has not gone to Lhasa and seen the Jowo then it was considered inauspicious. In addition, my brother was a monk. So then we said that the situation was also not good so we should go on pilgrimage and we went to Lhasa. We left in the 11th month and at the end of the 12th month, just before the Mönlam [Tib. smon lam] Prayer Festival

ended, we arrived in Lhasa. So at Lhasa, my mother and brother attended the Mönlam and visited the pilgrimage sites. I stayed for about 15-20 days and then once again went back to Chamdo to trade.

When I arrived there, it was just around Losar, the Tibetan New Year in the first Tibetan month. Usually from Chamdo, I would send telegrams and used to receive replies. At that time, no matter how many telegrams I sent, there were no replies. When I asked the Chinese about this, they said that it was just that they were not receiving them. So we didn't know anything. Then from Dartsedo, our trader called Litang Shalotsang [Tib. shag lho tshang] had fled and come to Chamdo on the way to [central] Tibet. He said, "Wow! at Litang the Tibetans and the Chinese are fighting. From Dartsedo the Chinese soldiers came and it is too much and both our monastery and village are really putting up a stiff fight. We couldn't stay so we fled. So there is no point in sending telegrams". Then as we were paying attention to what was happening, traders were fleeing and they said that from Dartsedo and Litang the soldiers were just filling up by day and night. Then I got afraid and thought to myself that if I got stuck at Chamdo, then my brother and mother would be left at Lhasa. So I bought some watches and quickly sold them at Chamdo and returned to Lhasa.

At Lhasa the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region had started. It was 1956 and Huo Long [this is Chenyi] came from down there [China] and our Lithangpa Tratru Alo [Tib. grwa phrug a lo], the relative of the late Jayang Shepa [Tib. 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa] and their kind had also come. His real home was in Litang. The former Jayang Shepa was born in Litang. So his relative Tratru Alo was there and even these days they say he is there. He was quite famous and earlier during the Guomindang, he might have been a leader or a great scholar in Labrang Tashikhyil [Tib. bkra shis 'khyil]. He had come up. At that time, we were just young men.

At first, we had only heard that the fighting had started. Then some of our fellow Lithangpa fled and came up to Lhasa. They were saying that they fought. They fought for 1 month and 27 days at the monastery. Then the monastery was lost. They bombed and did this and that. So they were saying so many things and had come to Lhasa. Then while we watched the opening [of the Preparatory Committee], the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama and government officials were all there. The Chinese representative Huo Long had come from China. So during this time, Andru Gombo Tashi [Tib. a 'brug mgon po bkra shis] and all of the Litang traders all said that things were just too bad and such fighting was going on in our country. Then we wondered what should be done. So it was said that we should go to speak to Tratru Alo and asked him to begin some talk to reach an agreement.

So Andru Gombo Tashi, Jamatsang [Tib. bya ma tshang], Jangtsa [Tib. 'jang tsha] Chöndze, and the elders and the better ones [Tib. drag pa], all went to see Tratru Alo. We were just young men and were towards the end of the line and never heard what they said. What Alo said was, "Alas! [Tib. a kha kha] it's just too bad what has happened to our country. So that's how it is with our country [Tib. lung pa], they won't listen very easily. However, it is done, so what should we do? I will see what can be done. However, our [people] are dumb [Tib. lkugs pa]. Even if the Chinese would stay here and stretch out their necks and let us kill them with swords it would be difficult to kill them. It is difficult to challenge them and so we should think and immediately, I can't think of anything. Our country's people are just our rural people and even if we tell them to hand over their weapons and not to do anything to the Chinese they will not listen. Now if we have to go and tell them, that is also dangerous. So whether there would be happiness or sadness it is just like the saying back home, "Whether you will be strangled with a silk string or with a string made from yak hair, anyway you will die." [Tib. ske dar skud kyis bsdams kyang shi red/ ske rtsid skud kyis bsdams kyang shi red] Anyway you are going to die and so you just fight, right? So I will see what to do". That much, we heard.

So besides that, we just stayed at Lhasa. While at Lhasa, Ratra Ngawang [Tib. dbra phrug ngag dbang] and us young guys, there were many of us young guys, about 40-50, including traders and monks. So we met and said, "It seems we can't go back to our homeland. There must be something we can do. Maybe we can see if we can go down there and fight. If not then maybe we could do something here". So we went to see Andru Gombo Tashi and said, "We should do something, we just can't hang around like this. So we wondered what we could do". Gombo Tashi said, "There is probably something we can do. We have to think about it. It's great that you have enthusiasm. However, if you don't sacrifice a little bit of your private concerns then probably the common welfare cannot be achieved. We are all traders with money and on the one hand if you only think about the money, I don't think we will achieve our aim. So what do you think about this?" So we said, "We have nothing to think about and since we have no way of going back home where are we going to take our money and go. We have no need for money. Some of us are private traders, others are communal ones [Tib. spyi pa]. Whether we are private or communal, we have no homes to return to, we have nothing to do with money. So whatever you decide that's it. The most important thing is for you to be our leader [Tib. 'go khrid] and we cannot rest until we do something". Andrusang, in our Kham country was the best one in our Litang country. Whatever consultations we had to make to the Tibetan government, whatever requests we may have had to make; if not, then whatever kind of methods we should employ, you (Andrusang) must do it". So he said, "You should not trade and do less for your private concerns and do whatever you can". So there were a lot of us young men and women from Litang country. And we young males were quite show-offish at that time and we thought that it was quite easy to kill and cut up the Chinese. So we consulted and said, "Andru Jinda has told us not to trade, that if we want to achieve something we have to sacrifice our private concerns. So we have to think about this. But there is nothing to think about and from this day, we should stop our trading work". All said, "Oh Yes! we will not trade from this day on". So we stopped trading and did some worth while work. So when we asked our Jinda [Andru] what to do, he told us to buy good horses and buy as many arms and ammunition as possible and even if we didn't have spares to give to others to get ourselves well armed. Since we were from Kham, most of us were armed anyway. However, we bought some good ammunitions and if we needed to change good guns with bad ones, we did that and got well prepared. Those who had horses had them and those who did not, bought them. Then while this situation continued, one day Andru Jinda said, "We can't just hang around like this. A group of you stay with me and another group probably will have to go to India and see if you can get help from Taiwan or the Americans who are enemies of the communist". "All right," we said and so we formed two groups. When we came to Kalimpong, we were 27 young males. Ngawang and the others stayed with him.

Q: Where? At Lhasa?

A: Yes, Lhasa. So from that time on, the group called Chushigandru started. So we came to India. At first, we did not know anybody. The only ones we knew were Gyadotsang Wangdü [Tib. dbang 'dus] the one who was killed in Mustang and his

maternal uncle who was an elderly monk. They had reached Kalimpong. And Andrutsang Lodrö Phüntso [Tib. blo gros phun tshogs] was also in Kalimpong. We only knew their bunch and we did not at all know the Tibetan government officials, like Jenkhentsisum and Gyalo Thöndup. We had one or two of our Litang people who knew some Chinese. So at Kalimpong, we tried to contact some Taiwan person and near Kangchen Cinema there was a Guomindang Chinese, a husband and a wife, both cleanly dressed. So it seemed that he was working for the Guomindang intelligence. So we spoke to him and told him our story of how in Kham we fought and revolted against the Chinese and asked if he could be of any help. He said that that was just excellent and that he would inform Taiwan about everything. So he took some photographs and wrote our whole story down. We were sort of happy too, thinking that if Taiwan could help with arms and parachute us into Kham, that would be very beneficial and we planned to take some methods.

Q: What was the name of the Chinese man?

A: Oh, I swear by the Three Jewels that I don't remember, he was staying in the Kangchen Cinema area. What was he called- something like mister [Ch. xian sheng]. At that time, they were about my age now, around 50 or 60. So we contacted him. I didn't know Chinese well then, and so I never went to see him much. My two friends who spoke Chinese did. One was called Tsewang Dorje [Tib. tshe dbang rdo rje] and Phüntso [Tib. phun tshogs].

Then one day, Gyalo Thöndup, I don't know how he knew, but he knew that we had come to Kalimpong. Most probably he learned from Gyadotsang elderly monk or Andrutsang Lodrö Phüntso or Kungö Khenjung or Shakabpa. When we were at Kalimpong there was nothing, but later, just before the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama went down to China, there were certain people in Kalimpong who were named as the representatives of the three great monasteries and the three provinces, Chökasum [mong. chol kha Tib. gsum]. We didn't make much connection with them. Then one day, this person called Gyalo Thöndup, a relative of the Dalai Lama, told us to meet him. We were told not to go anywhere since he was to come and see us the next day and that we all should meet him. I really don't know how this message actually came since we were just young men hanging and roaming around Kalimpong. Near the Durping Hill there was the Manjula Khoti (house), most of our companions were staying there. I was staying at Bagdara with Andrutsang and Gyadotsang at Raka Khoti. I was just walking around when the message came. Alright, we thought. The next day when we went, you know there is the Jayangshar [Tib. 'jam dbyangs shar] Khenjung- I think he must be dead now, he was earlier in the Tibetan government

Q: He is one of the Jenkhentsisum, right?

A: Yes, among the Jenkhentsisum. He is the Jayangshar Khenjung.

Q: The one called Ganden Villa Khenjung?

A: Yes, we were called to his house. You know, these days there is Ga Yungdrung [Tib. dga' g.ung drung]?

Q: Yes, Yes.

A: Yes, she was his wife and they were just starting to love each other at that time. While we were waiting outside the two were horsing around the garage. Yes, it was around that time. So while we were waiting we were told to come in. Around the back, a black car drove up and it was said that that was Gyalo Thöndup. We never met him before and we shook hands. He said he was glad to meet us and also glad that after what had happened to our country and having come to a foreign land that we were determined and vowed to work for our country. "I will do whatever I can so as not to disappoint you". So we thanked him. He asked us what our thoughts were. We said we were thinking of going to Taiwan. They told us that they would train us and drop us in Kham and supply us with arms. So that was the plan and from here we were going to Taiwan and then we were going to ask them to parachute us into Kham and if they would give us arms so we could fight the Chinese.

Then Gyalo said, "Taiwan can't even look after themselves and they are relying on the Americans, so if you go to Taiwan then it will not be of use. So I will try and arrange for you to be sent to America. So if it is possible to go to America then you do your best to go there. This will then be beneficial now as well as in the future". So we all were rather glad and said, "Thank you". Everyone, the whole world, had heard that America was stronger than Taiwan and so if something should come out of this, then it would be very good. And so we said thank you and made the decision right there. After telling Gyalo about our contact with the Chinese he told us not to have any contact with him. So we said okay. When this Chinese man tried to contact us, we avoided him. Now what to do? My friend was telling me that this Chinese man was not at all leaving him alone and asking him to come. So we had no choice but run away (avoid him).

Then the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama came for the Buddha Jayanti, Zhou Enlai and all came. As I saw it then, it seemed like that Jenkhentsisum and all the kudrak in Kalimpong had various plans for the Dalai Lama not to return. They had accepted many things. They told us that we had to do some bodyguard duty for the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. They wrote letters and said many things. Finally they sent us to demonstrate and hand out petitions to Nehru and others and relate the bad situation in the Kham area and how the Chinese had caused so much suffering. And then from Darjeeling, there was Bagdrola [Tib. bag bro lags] who was working and staying at Yabshi's Factory. He was sent as an interpreter. Then a lot of kudrak came. Alo Chöndze was there too and also Jenkhentsisum, the representatives of the three great monasteries, representatives of the three provinces, Chökasum and Amdo Gyetong and many of these kind of people. They all came down. We were the younger men and didn't understand much about politics and when we came to Delhi we just looked around and we would just do whatever they told us to do.

Then, I think it was the house where Nehru stayed, but I'm not sure, there were flowers and all. We were all dressed in our Kham clothes, with satin shirts and pants, with hats. We all made the same thing and this was all made in Kalimpong. We bought and made them from our own pockets. At that time, we bought the furry kind of black Italian hat. So at that time, the pilgrims called us "The black hat group" [Tib. zhwa nag shog kha]. We had long swords at our waists. So we came to where Nehru was and he was

sort of smiling/laughing and looking at us. Who knows what he was saying. The petition was given to him.

I don't know what was made or received or anything like that. I don't know at all. I doubt any reply was received. A detailed petition of the Chinese atrocities was given. This was the time of the "Indo-China Bhai Bhai" the Chinese and Indians are brothers. Then the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama arrived.

We were at the airport to receive them. Then Zhou Enlai came and we pulled up our dresses and showed our asses and did the worst things. However, Nehru was also with him. So we did these things. We didn't know any political systems. Then you know there was the guest house on the other side of India gate. I can't recall the name. He [the Dalai Lama] stayed there and we received a transmission [Tib. lung] of the Ganden Lhagya and the Mani. There were some of our friends who had fought the Chinese and fled Litang, some later went to America. So they told the whole story to the Dalai Lama. He said, "Alas! I hope it will turn out alright. Now don't be disappointed and regretful. It will be alright". That was it and then we returned. Then we went for a pilgrimage to Riwalsar, [Tib. mtsho pad ma] and others arrived at Bodh Gaya where the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama had both arrived. Here Taktser Rimpoche also came. We were staying at the Chinese temple and Taktser Rimpoche came and wrote our whole story down and took photographs. It was said that he was the relative of the Dalai Lama and that he was staying in America. So I was pretty relaxed and thought something was being done. Then I don't know where the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama went, maybe to Delhi or something like that. We went straight up to Kalimpong. At Kalimpong, who knows where the order came from, maybe some kudrak or Jenkhentsisum, but it was said that we had to go and fight at Yadong.

Q: In Yadong?

A: Yes, at Yadong. Andru Gombo Tashi and the Tibetan government Military Headquarter, Magji Lekhung [Tib. dmag spyi las khungs] were to fight. Two of our Litang people were sent as messengers. One of them was in the 22nd Regiment [Tibetan Regiment in Dheradun], but he is dead. The other, is still in Kalimpong. He is called Lobsang Palden [Tib. blo bzang dpal ldan] and the other was called Triley [Tib. 'phrin las].

Q: What were their names?

A: One is Lobsang Palden. He is still in Kalimpong. Triley, was the servant of Gyadotsang. He's dead now. So the two were sent as messengers to tell Gombo Tashi and Magji Lekhung to fight. So we, the traders around Kalimpong, were to go and stop the road at Sharsingma [in Yadong] and fight the Chinese. It was said that the plan was to tell the Dalai Lama that there was fighting and request him not to go and make him stay in India. So it is said, that when the messengers reached there, Magji Lekhung said, "We are unable to make war and we could not be responsible for such an action". So, if Magji Lekhung could not fight then of course Gombo Tashi would not also. Anyway, things did not turn out as expected. We received a message one day saying that we didn't have to go to Sharsingma.

They were telling us that we did not have to go, but we, at Kalimpong ground tsamba, packed them. We made a sort of dough from butter and tsamba. We did whatever possible since if we had to go and fight we had to take things to eat. We said that things like Baji, flattened rice, was beneficial when fighting and we prepared them. There were around 100 people in all from a traders in Kalimpong. We already numbered 27, right? So we got ready but one day they said that we didn't have to go. Then the Dalai Lama came to Kalimpong and then went to Gangtok where he stayed for a few days because of heavy snowfall on Natöla [Tib. sna stod la] Mountain Pass. Then he went to Tibet. So all of the plans that these kudrak made, fell through. Nothing came of it and the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet. We were left behind.

Q: Now while the Dalai Lama was here in India what was the thinking behind the planned fight with the Chinese in Yadong. Was it some land

A: What these kudrak were planning was to stop the Dalai Lama's route to Tibet. If there was commotion in Tibet, then the Dalai Lama would have to stay in India and not return. It is said that that was the plan. Now you should ask around. There are many who knew this. Gyalo Thöndup is around too. I think he is one of them. Now Shakabpa

Q: Yes, Gyalo Thöndup is the one who wanted the Dalai Lama to remain [in India]. Then there was the other side that wanted the Dalai Lama to return right?

A: Yes, so the ones who wanted the Dalai Lama to stay were the ones in India. The Jenkhentsisum and the others in India wanted the Dalai Lama to stay. However, the Dalai Lama left.

Q: So if there was fighting and commotion in Yadong, then the Dalai Lama could not return, right?

A: Yes, if Magji Lekhung could make a kind of war and create a commotion, then the Dalai Lama could not return. So it is said that that was the plan. So at that time, we got the message and we got ready. These are all actual events. So it is said that this was their aim and this can be clearly seen. So at that time, we were in Kalimpong. We got ready. Shriram (a trader in Kalimpong) bought a lot of World War II items, like boots, back-packs, spades, pickaxes, and water bottles. It is said that when the Americans returned from Assam, Shriram bought all of these things at wholesale prices in Kolcutta. So we bought a lot these things and were ready to go. Then, later, we did not have to go. So we just stayed around for about 7 to 8 months. It must have been 7-8 months, since the Dalai Lama came around the 10th month for a pilgrimage to India. So, on the 20th of the 2nd Tibetan month, I think, maybe it was the 22nd. On January 22, he [the Dalai Lama] left Kolcutta and arrived in Kalimpong which had been the center of the rebellious activities. On February 25, he reached Yadong and on the same day he arrived in Lhasa (from Chinese history). Anyway, something like that. It was the Tibetan month. At that time, I didn't know nor use the English months. So on that date, Gyalo Thöndup said that we needed 6 people from the list of 27. The 6 were: Gyadotsang Wangdü, the one killed at Mustang. Another was Tsewang Dorji, the one I said was good at Chinese. He was the nephew of the chandzö of our Kyamgöntsang [Tib. skyabs mgon tshang] [the Labrang of Chigdrub Kyamgön]. Then there was Baba Jangra Tashi [Tib. lcang ra bkra shis], that makes three. Then a servant of Gyadotsang. We used to call him Bhulü, though he must have had a different name. So that makes four.

Then my companion, Lotse [Tib. blo tshe]. Then myself, the sixth one. So we were told to come.

Q: Among the six, only you are alive?

A: Yes, all are gone, except myself. So the six of us were told to come. So we said "What are we going to do if only six are selected?" So Gyalo Thöndup said that at first 6 were to come and later more would be sent for. So we believed that and they said that we would learn about wireless [communication]. So the 6 of us were to wait at night at the 9th mile [in Kalimpong] since he said that he was going to come and pick us up. So from Kalimpong we were dressed in some Marwari clothes of Kurta-Surta. So our clothes were left in Gyalo Thöndup's car. Each of us were told not to bring any money or watches or knives. So we left all that behind and in our pockets [they] put Rs. 300. So we waited at the 9th mile and at around 8 or so Gyalo Thöndup came to pick us up.

Q: He came himself?

A: Yes, and with him was his cook called Gelong [Tib. dge slong] who was from Siling. So we went down to Teesta [Tib. bkra shis brag] and Siliguri and into the tea gardens. After some time, there was no car road in the tea gardens. So we were hungry and so some Alu Dam (dried curried potato) and puri (bread) were bought and given to us. So we ate in the car and he also ate with us till we were satiated. Gelong had something with him that seemed like a compass. Later, we learned that it was a compass. So he gave Gelong the directions and told him to make sure that no one got lost. We were young men at that time and obviously we wouldn't get separated from Gelong. You know the river that comes from Teesta? Today it is in Bangladesh but previously it was in East Pakistan. The river separated India and Pakistan. On the other side of the river there was a motorable road. So he told us to cross the river and once on the other side we were to go south on the road. That's what he said since I was listening attentively. So we did just that. However the river crossing was difficult because in certain areas it was quite deep. So we went up and then down. Once, Gelong had a difficult moment, but we held hands and were able to hold on to him. He went by himself and had quite a moment. The problem was that the river bed was sandy and our legs got stuck deeper into the sand. So gradually we proceeded. However there were some people looking. They had shorts and cloth tied around their heads and pants and kurta-surta carried on their heads.

Then we were able to cross to the other side and then that was it. We continued ahead and Gelong said that probably that was the road and told us to rest in the forest. There were some trees and we lay down. Then certain soldiers were coming. It was a moonlit night and we looked at them. It looked like Indian soldiers. The Pakistani soldiers were exactly alike, their dress and the 305 English Carbine they carried. So we said that we must be in some Indian territory and it may not be Pakistan. Then Gelong signaled. They shown their torch and Gelong responded in kind. Some signal was given. Then he said to come since they were our companions. Then we got up and went. Then we shook hands. There were two Pakistani soldiers and Taktser Rimpoche's servant Thöndrup, who is presently in the States. You know the one with the Mongolian wife?

Q: Gyentsen [Tib.rgal mtshan]?

A: Yes, Gyentsen. Now, he's called Gyentsen and around here he's known as Thöndup. Yes, it is said that he has a Mongolian wife, a fat one. Last year, I called him when I was in the States but I did not meet him.

Q: Yes, Gyentsen and Barbara.

A: Yes, that's it. So he was there, sent as a servant of Taktser Rimpoche. So he took us in a car and we travelled for about half an hour when we approached a large border check post. When we got inside there was a bald American sleeping . The bald American who was to receive us was in there . So we went with the bald one and felt reassured to meet him.

Q: So this border was with Pakistan right?

A: Yes, East Pakistan in those days. Then they took us. Whether they took us in the car or the train, like prisoners, we didn't know where the hell we went. Anyway we travelled for two days and nights. Finally, we came to a plane. Probably it was Dacca or Chittagong, who knows where it was but we travelled for two days and nights and arrived at this place. Then the plane took us off to Thailand. Much later, when I looked, it was Bangkok. So here the plane refueled. We, like prisoners, were not permitted to come out. We didn't know where we were taken or where we were going. We didn't know a thing. So we were at the airport for about an hour. The food we got was military style, in cans. So we ate that and then they flew us off. On hindsight, as I look at it today, they probably flew us to Taiwan. So later when I examined how the others were sent, they were being taken to Taiwan. They kept us on the ground but when we looked out, the letters were all in Chinese. The ground was just filled with jets taking off and landing. Then we took off again into Japanese territory and landed at Okinawa. It is said that Okinawa had the headquarters of the American 7th fleet. They assigned us to somebody and here we went through a complete physical examination and, I don't know why but they gave us Japanese military uniforms to wear. So we stayed there for a few days. Then Taktse Rimpoche came.

Q: To Okinawa?

A: Yes, to Okinawa. At that time, Gyentsen did not speak English very well. He couldn't communicate very well and so Taktse Rimpoche was teaching him. So after all the physical examinations we were once again taken to a place which was about four hours away from Okinawa. Today, it is said that it was Guham. Anyway, it seemed like a place where the Americans and the Japanese really fought each other. There were wrecked ships and planes on the shore and numerous gunnery walls. When we were there, the bodies of the Japanese didn't seemed to be well taken care of. Among the jagged rocks were skeletons, hand grenades, bullets and guns left around. So this is where we received the main training and we were not taken to America.

Q: So most of the people here were sort of dark with frizzy hair, right?

A: Generally, it was all Japanese people. We were with Americans who were the CIA or whoever. Everyone was military

personnel. So we were trained there. With Taktse Rimpoche and two servants and the 6 of us. So there we went through the main training. So the main training was in wireless communication. The main training was wireless operation, cartography, guerilla warfare, intelligence work, arms and ammunition, especially about the ones in Tibet. Then how to throw grenades, explosives C4 and C3 for destroying bridges, etc. All together we trained for 8 months and during free moments we were trained in parachute jumping in the mornings and evenings.

Then we came back to Okinawa where we did the parachuting. We did it 6 times in Okinawa. We learned the wireless in 6 months and in the 7th month we practiced and around the 8th month we checked the items to be taken to Tibet and we sent the wireless as if we were in Tibet and they checked it [a dry run]. So after all the checking was done and when we were about to leave, one day, they called me. At that time, I was the most qualified to send and receive wireless. So I went to see Taktse Rimpoche. He said that I must go to Lhasa. I said, "Please, may you live long! [Tib. sku tshe ring] I don't want to go to Lhasa". He said that I could take who ever I wanted to and go to Lhasa. They had to make two groups, one to go to Lhasa and the other to Kham. I said, "Please don't say this at all. I never wanted to go to Lhasa, because I don't know anybody at Lhasa. Earlier Alo Chöndze got into trouble and was put into a Chinese prison and finally had to escape to India and nothing came of his work. If I go to Lhasa, to do this kind of work, then one day the Chinese will catch me, if not something will happen. So please don't send me. I want to go to Kham where I have relatives and people of the same country where they have been fighting with the Chinese previously. I want to go there". So [Taktse Rimpoche] said, "Please don't say this. You are good at sending wireless and we need someone who knows the wireless well to go to Tibet, otherwise if the communication gets fouled up then there will be difficulties. In the Kham area there is already guerilla warfare but in the Ü [Tib. dbus] area without the Tibetan government and others, without the united effort of all Tibet, it won't work. Just Kham and specially, only Litang resistance will not be of any use. So because of this, you must go to [central] Tibet".

So I said, "I have to think about this and I cannot guarantee anything". Then he did get me to think that what he said was also true. If we don't move from everywhere and just where there was only guerilla warfare from Litang, even if we got arms, we couldn't manage [a war]. So I asked him what I had to do at Lhasa. He said, "You know that Gombo Tashi and Chushigandru have started an organization and they have done their best and these days it is getting better. So you two go and give your best. Do your intelligence work and contact Gombo Tashi and he will do all the relations with the Tibetan government. So you two do your share and Gombo Tashi will do all of his. So the two of you meet with Phala Drönyerchemmo and Gombo Tashi and you don't have to meet with anybody else". So that's what he said. Then I thought that if this was done then maybe it would be alright. If we were to meet with Gombo Tashi and he contacted Phala, then, maybe it was alright and I told him that I would think about this. So he told me to come the next day and I did. He said, "Now you must decide soon since its nearing time to leave and we need to make preparations soon". Then he asked whom I wanted to help me. I said, "It doesn't matter who you send, but you have to send someone well and fit. If one of us gets sick it will be difficult if the other isn't fit". So he said, "You and Lotse seemed to get on well and even shared the same quarters. Also when we take into consideration wireless communication, you are the best one and the second is Baba Jangra Tashi [Tib. lchang ra bkra shis]. So you two are the main ones. You take Lotse and Tsewang Doje, the one who knows Chinese will be sent with him [Baba Jangra Tashi]". Wandü, the master and the servant did not know the wireless, no matter how much they were trained they didn't pick it up. So Taktse Rimpoche said, "The two of them will be trained in guerilla warfare. So this is the reason why we are making two groups, so you please accept this". So I said, "I will talk to my companion". Then I told my companion, "This is what they are asking the two of us, I don't know". He said, "I swear by the Buddha statue in Jokhang, Jo [Tib. jo bo] Rimpoche that we might get caught in Tibet. The Tibetan government will hand us in, you know. If something doesn't work out, the kudrak will hand us in, you know". So I said, "It may not be so bad. We have to contact Gombo Tashi and we don't have to meet any kudrak. If we are told to meet them by Phala Drönyerchemmo, then we will have to. So, I don't know. We should think about it". Then one day we were told to come and along with Taktse Rimpoche and our better trainer was also there. So we sort of accepted and agreed to go. So they were to go to Kham and we went to Ü. So that's where all the plans were made. So we were the first group to be dropped and they were the other; in one plane. So our training was over. Then we were planning to go to Tibet and we were testing out our arms and ammunitions. During this process one of our companions, I don't know how it happened, but he accidentally shot his big toe with his pistol. It was Tsewang Dorji who was to be dropped into Kham. His big toe was pierced. He couldn't go and was hospitalized and was to be dropped about a month later.

So the 5 of us flew back the way we first came to East Pakistan. As I look at it today it was very close to Siliguri. During the 2nd World War there were some airfields. Grass had grown everywhere. There were about 500-600 American soldiers. They were there solely for our purpose.

Q: 500-600?

A: Yes, they were trying to remove the grass. When we flew or landed, fires had to be set. Cans of kerosene were lit.

Q: Otherwise, one could not see?

A: Otherwise, there was no electricity in this area. It was an empty land in East Pakistan, today's Bangladesh, very close to Siliguri. So we were to be dropped on the 8th Tibetan month, on 15th day of 1957 [October 1957]. We were loaded and flown off, the 5 of us. Until the two of us were dropped first. The others were not permitted to drop because we were the first group. We were to be dropped near Samye and if not the second possibility was somewhere in Chönkorgyel [Tib. chos 'khor rgyal]. But both areas were covered with clouds and so we could not be dropped. So we circled the Northern areas and came towards Phari [the snow mountain] Tsering Chenga [Tib. tshe ring mched Inga], over Bhutan. When one looked down one could see Kalimpong. When we went north, the town was on the left and upon return, on the right. Then we returned to the base in East Pakistan. Then on the 7th month of the 20th day, we were to be dropped again. Yes, it was exactly, the 20th. When we went down it was the 20th too. We were joking around saying to each other, "On the 20th we went towards them [when they first flew for training] and on the 20th they dropped us". So on the 20th day- mind you, were talking about the Tibetan month. It was the 7th month.

Q: 7th?

A: Yes, I mean the 8th month of the Tibetan calendar, on the 20th day we were dropped into Tibet. On that day, the weather was absolutely clear. So the two of us were dropped at Samye. Our companions, like Gyadotsang Wangdü and the others were taken to Kham to be dropped. The weather there was bad and so they could not be dropped and they had to return. So the two of us were dropped at Samye. It was a difficult drop since in Tibet the wind is strong. However we managed to land safely. We hid our things and the chute in the pitch. That night we could not burn it [the chute]. If we make a fire then people might see it, so we buried everything in about 7 or 8 pitches and we circled around the hills and hid them. At dawn we reached the top of the hill.

Q: Was there anybody helping you on the ground.

A: No, nobody. Nobody knew at all. They had instructed us not to go to Lhasa for about a month since there might be some suspicion if the drone of the plane was detected.

Q: So, you didn't go for about a month.

A: Yes, we didn't go to central Tibet for a month and we were instructed to lie low in the village area because if the Chinese heard the drone of the plane then they might enquire in Lhasa and start searching houses. So that was the suspicion, a procedure of intelligence discipline. So we hung around the village for about a month. During this time we met some of our countrymen (Lithangpa) who were on a pilgrimage. We met some of our excellent companions. Among them were two who had been at Kalimpong and we had been together and put the amulet over our heads and had made a pledge. They too had come on a pilgrimage. So we spoke and told them all not to tell anyone that we were there. So before they left we did the Khamba custom of putting the amulet over our heads and making a pledge not to tell anyone. Then there was a better off elderly one among them. We asked him to go and see Gombo Tashi and to tell him that we had come and we had to arrange a time and the place where we would meet. There was this place called Samye Tsachuka [Tib. bsam yas tsha qu kha] where there was a hot spring and said to be the place where the minister, Lönbo Garwa [Tib. blon po mgar ba] hid Gyasa [Tib. rgya bza'] the Chinese Princess Wencheng. So we said to come there and we would go to Samye Tsachuka. So they went and we went to Phembo and other places. We had many things to do, like checking the airfield at the north, the radar and things about the plane. So we made the things that we had to make.

What the Americans had sent with us were 100 dotse of Tibetan currency and 100 dayan, that's all. Some people say that they had sent gold and silver. Not a single penny was sent! The reason was that they told us that whatever money we needed we should get through Gombo Tashi and then Phala Drönyerchemmo would give it. When we arrived in Tibet no money was given to us, however, what the Americans had sent with us was just that. At that time, the 100 dotse and 100 dayan was not bad. We bought a horse for 100 dotse. So we took some loans from our fellow Lithangpa. They had brought some things to sell to the villages. We bought them. And so at the village, we posed as traders and at times pilgrims and in that way we proceeded and did our work.

Later, we met Gombo Tashi as planned and he had made arrangements for us to meet Drönyerchemmo Phala. So Gombo Tashi took us to meet Phala Drönyerchemmo at Norbulinga. We wore monk's robes and at that time, monks would not bring any suspicion. So we met him twice. On one of those occasions, he said that he had arranged an audience [with the Dalai Lama] on the next day. When we got to Norbulinga he said that there was some internal matters and so we did not get our audience. So we got no audience and could not relate our matters [to the Dalai Lama]. The Americans had told us that if we wanted an audience we should ask for it.

So our main contact was the Tibetan government in addition to that the Khamba resistance led by Gombo Tashi. We were instructed that the policy of the Tibetan government would be done by the Tibetan government and so we should get in touch with them. So we told the full story of our work and they said that they would contact us later. It seemed that they could not tell everyone. I don't know what kind of inner group they had but truthfully there didn't seem to be much and it seemed that they could not trust each other.

Q: So the only government contact was with Phala Drönyerchemmo.

A: Yes, we had no way to get in touch with anyone else. Procedurally, we were not permitted to do otherwise. So they said that if we got an audience with the Dalai Lama, then we should go and tell him. If they didn't give us an audience, then that would be it. If they did, then we could go. So we said that that was the instructions we got, but in the end we did not get an audience. Who knows what was the problem internally. So, since we got there in 1957, for 6-7 months we stayed around the hills; Mindru Dzari [Tib. smin drug rdza ri], Ghephel Utse [Tib. dge 'phel dbu rtse], Sera Yekor [Tib. ?], and among hills and rocks. We could not go to Lhasa since there were so many Lithangpa traders who knew us. Besides, people knew that we formed a group and went abroad. So for 6-7 months we lived among rocky hills, while doing our work. We went to see Phala Drönyerchemmo twice. We used to meet Gombo Tashi quite often. We sent messages and made arrangements for him to come and see us and vice versa. We met a few times. Gombo Tashi started the Chushigandru at Lhasa. We did our best to make contacts with the outside.

What the Americans were saying was "How are you going to revolt against the Chinese. What is your plan? From the Tibetan intelligence side, military and civil, what kind of method are you taking? From what angle should we lend assistance? Should we help from the intelligence side, militarily or peacefully? In what kind of field are you going to make the movement?" So they were saying that they wanted to see plans.

From the Tibetan government side, from Phala Drönyerchemmo's side, not an inkling of a plan was given. That's how it was. Nothing was given through us. I doubt if anything was given through Gyalo Thöndup - looking at what was said later. Anyway, from our side no plan was given to the Americans about how we were going to resist the Chinese and from what angle the help should come. None was given through us and it didn't seem like any was given through Gyalo Thöndup. I don't know what connections there were when the Chinese first came around nor do I know what was done towards the end of 1959 but between those period nothing was given through us. When we miser were revolting the government had no plans whatsoever given

through us.

Finally, in desperation - nothing could be done. The Chinese were getting more and more belligerent and more and more strict, the Tibetan government's bravery was getting weaker and weaker and they were all internally suspicious and afraid of each other. Then one day, as time went on, drönyerchemmo did not dare to bring himself to meet us. When we said that we were going to come and see him, he told us not to come to see him at Norbulinga. Outside, he appointed a monk official as the Acting Drönerchemmo, dröntsab [Tib. mgron tshab]. It was said that previously he was a magji- his name is Lobsang something, I don't recall. Anyway there was this person.

Q: Could it be Kesang? Magji Kesang [Tib. skal bzang]? [a member of the 6 inner group]

A: Oh!, I think so, yes, it's Magji Kesang, was said to be from the north [Tib. hor phrug]. So we had to meet him and we were not allowed to see him [Phala]. So when we met him and said what to do, he had no plans whatsoever. So through us nothing was said about a plan and the specific assistance required. So we got desperate and said, "Well there's nothing else to do". Gombo Tashi kind of asked the deity to go into a trance because it was said that the Chinese wanted the Siling people, Amdo and the Khamba to be sent back to their countries and the Siling people were ordered to return. Then the Amdo and the Khamba would be thrown out and it was said that unmanageable kudrak of the Tibetan government were to be forcefully arrested; this was said to be the plan.

So during such a time, the Chushigandru asked the Panglung Gyelchen [Tib. spang lung rgyal chen] [note: Shungden [Tib. shugs ldan]] to go into trance and consulted him. Now, Gombo Tashi had already organized the Chushigandru well. Everybody had made a pledge and it was well organized. The reason being that while we were being trained by the Americans, Chushigandru had organized and used a peaceful method of performing the long life ritual for the Dalai Lama and asking him to give religious teachings.